

SAN FRANCISCO (Calif.)

CHRONICLE Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00001R000300010016-7

Circ.: m. 225,429

S. 276,473

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Date: MAR 8 1960



COURTHOUSE CUSTODIAN ED. REISWIG
Names, nuggets, and a new motel-hopping story

The Great Downieville Trial

Sniper Discovers Kindly Motherwell

By George Draper

DOWNIEVILLE, Sierra County, March 7—A gray-eyed gold "sniper" named Ed Reisswig stuck his thumbs in his belt today and delivered a gentle dissertation on the morals and manners of Larry and Motherwell.

Reisswig, in his less glamorous role as janitor of the county courthouse, has enjoyed an unrivaled opportunity to converse with and observe the leading man in the big murder trial here.

On his days off, this kindly janitor prospects for gold, rambling over this mountain country that is so steep the old timers say you can see the cows coming home by looking up the chimney.

AN OFFER

"One thing I've noticed about his lordship," Reisswig said, "is that he's a very considerate man."

"Now you take the first day in his trial started and the courtroom was packed like a powder tin. There were a lot of cigarette butts around and the usual mess. So that afternoon when the court is over and I'm getting ready to clean up the place why Larry comes over to me."

"Ed," he says, "I'm the cause of all this mess and I know it's making a lot of extra work for you. If the sheriff will let me I'd be glad to help you clean it up each night."

Reisswig drew a small bottle of gold nuggets from his pocket and rattled them affectionately.

"He's a likeable man," the gold "sniper" went on, "but that's the trouble with those fellows — those confidence men. You get where you begin to trust 'em and they give you the business."

Reisswig owns the Missouri Flat gold mine up the creek near Sierra City. In the summers he leases the mine to another man and they split the gold.

But Reisswig's greatest love is getting down in the diggings along the banks of the swirling north fork of the Yuba river with his gold pan.

A few weeks ago he hit a \$50 pocket in a small crevice in the rocks.

Motherwell's disposition to perform kindly acts has applied primarily to elderly widows and "incorruptible" spinsters.

The 43-year-old confidence man is accused of murdering 72-year-old Pearl Putney after courting her with red roses and a "last fling," motel-hopping tour of the West.

CIA SECRETARY

Today, a not unattractive, spinster of 32 summers told a bizarre story of her motel-hopping with Motherwell only months before he was off and away with the wealthy Mrs. Putney.

Marie Colley, a shapely brunette with a syrupy southern drawl and a triste look in her dark eyes, said she was a Central Intelligence Agency secretary of "good morals" until she met Motherwell in late 1957.

Although she knew he was married and even knew his wife, she said, she could not resist darting off to Florida with the amiable man on a secret mission.

Motherwell told her, she said, that his business was so dangerous and secret he had to be watched around the clock by a bodyguard known as The Dagger.

Their cozy life in a little

Miami, Fla. apartment was rudely disrupted, she said, when Motherwell went away and she received a telegram he was dead.

"It said he had died and his ashes had been spread over the everglades. And it was signed: The Dagger," she said forlornly.

MISTAKE

Miss Colley said she packed her bags and returned, minus Motherwell, to her native Virginia, and then one day Larry suddenly showed up.

"He said the telegram was an error. His twin brother was killed," she said.

Miss Colley was so glad to see the reincarnated confidence man that she left with him again, this time on a long trip to California.

Curiously, they went through Marysville, the last place Mrs. Putney was seen alive about six months later.

On the way up the Feather River canyon, she added, they stopped and peered over the edge of a cliff.

"There was no attempt by Motherwell to push you off, was there?" asked defense attorney Jack Reges.

"I can't say," she whispered.

"Didn't you climb back in the car because of your fear of looking over a cliff?" Reges demanded.

"I think not," she said very faintly.

NO NAME TRACE

Another outstanding witness today before the prosecution rested its circumstantial murder case was Dr. George Stewart, professor of English at the University of California, and author of "Storm," "Fire," and other best-selling books.

Professor Stewart, an internationally known expert on people's names, said he was unable to find any trace of the name D'Avious in the United States, South America or Europe.

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This is the name of the Latin-type man with the little wax mustache whom Motherwell claims Mrs. Putney married after he left her in Las Vegas on Aug. 15, 1958.

Mrs. Putney's bones were found a year later on the Yuba Pass, near here.

MOTION MISSES

After the prosecution rested, defense attorney Reges asked Superior Judge Warren Steel, "to take the judicial bull by the horns and throw this case out that door."

Reges conceded the State has shown Motherwell to be a liar, "who trifles with the hearts of frustrated women."

"But if you add it all up, Judge, that doesn't mean a thing as to whether he killed Pearl Putney," the suave Washington, D. C. attorney said.

The elderly judge coughed, adjusted his black robe, and solemnly denied the motion.

Consequently, the Motherwell defense will open at 10 a. m. tomorrow. Motherwell is expected to take the witness stand.